



NEED EDUCATION REGARDING OUTDOOR FIRES

(Written Specially for The Bulletin)

I suppose you've read about those New Jersey forest fires which have just swept several thousand acres of that rather densely populated state. Doing damage variously estimated at from three to five million dollars. It was a little surprising to me to learn that there was a forest left in that crowded commonwealth capable of feeding a fire eighteen miles long and five wide. Or that there was so much as five million dollars' worth of standing timber in the whole state.

For, you see, though dressed lumber is held at almost peak-of-war prices still, standing timber isn't worth as much either acre by acre or board-foot by board-foot, as it was a dozen years ago. If you want to buy, whether a hundred thousand feet or a single board for a pantry shelf, you'll find the market price running on a scale high above any tree-top, but if you, as a farmer, want to sell a few hundred thousand feet of standing timber in your woods, you can't get as much for it now, as you could have got twelve years ago.

For instance: Twelve years ago I sold a few thousand feet to a portable saw-mill which was working on a lot adjacent to me and wanted a little more than that lot furnished to make up an order. I was paid \$1 a thousand for what was taken on the stump. The saw-mill operator offered me \$0.50 a thousand for all I had on sixty acres of forest-land mountain, just as it stood. Today that timber is still standing, bigger and better than it was twelve years ago. And the boards and beams which can be sawed out of it sell for more than double what similar lumber sold for twelve years ago. But I, owner and would-be seller of the raw material, can get no offer of over \$5 a thousand for it—\$1.50 a thousand less than I was actually offered a dozen years ago, when raw lumber sold for half what it now fetches!

Now, it takes quite a few acres of pretty good standing timber to come to even one million dollars, at \$5 a thousand on the stump. That there should have been so much left is a state like New Jersey, which one thinks of as mostly made up of suburbs to New York and Philadelphia, was matter for surprise.

Anyway, it's not there, now. The fire has wiped it out. The burning was a real disaster. Yet it was only one of the dozen or more forest fires chronicled in the daily papers of that same week. It was the biggest and most destructive of any, but the damage done by all the others combined must have come close to equaling that caused by it. And, as I thought about the waste and loss and suffering caused by woods fires, year by year and year after year, my memory went back to certain experiences of my own, with smaller outbreaks in my immediate neighborhood.

Why, only day before yesterday, my attention was attracted to dense clouds of smoke which began pouring over the ridge northwest of me. It was blowing a gale with occasional gusts strong enough to whip stout limbs off growing trees and

make frame houses shake to their sides. Evidently a brush or forest fire had started somewhere nearby to the northwest of me. And the gale was blowing straight from the same northwest. Directly in its path and extending for over three miles in a north and south course, rises a steep hill covered with forest. With a north-west wind blowing, a fire starting under the northern end of this hill was liable to sweep it from end to end. All my own wood and timber is on that hill. Naturally, the sight of these smoke clouds rolling over it made me anxious. Though I am past taking any active part in fire-fighting, I hurried out my fiver and started up the road running parallel with the threatened mountain to see just what was happening. When I got within sight of the fire, though its fury and swift spread were daunting enough I took some courage. For the alarm had gone whereover a telephone wire reached and already a hundred and fifty men were fighting it.

It had swept over about twenty acres of brush and grass land and, when a sharper gust of wind came along, the flames would seem to leap a hundred feet at one jump. Fortunately for us all, however, the area which was burning was bounded by roads on both the southern and eastern sides. The firefighters, conscious that no work of their could extinguish or even stay the course of the fire in the brush, had wisely formed on these roads and essayed to move more than to prevent its crossing them. It was a nervous quarter of an hour for at least one on-looker as the swirling line of smoke and flame bore down on them, temporarily shutting them quite from sight. But they stood their ground. The roadway stopped the creeping ground flame, and such brands as the wind carried across it were promptly extinguished before they had time to set fire to anything.

In fifteen minutes the danger was over—that is the danger to the several thousand acres of mountain forest which lay to the west of the fire. Before daylight it had burned itself out in the area to which it had been restricted, and all the watchers had to do was to go over it and extinguish small blazes in stumps or fence corners.

Investigation showed that some people just moved in from the city, had chosen that windy day to burn some rubbish in the pasture back of their barn. And of course, what they had started as a mere bon-fire was roaring over five acres of brush and small woods in about five minutes after they had nonchalantly scratched the match.

In the last thirty years I have, either alone or with neighborly help, put out four woods fires on that mountain. One was caused by lightning striking a dead pine tree around whose base had been thrown a heap of brush from some woodcutter's job. The other three were all due to carelessness or recklessness or ignorance—was this last one of two days ago.

One of the three was started by the "wand" from an old-fashioned muzzle-loading shot-gun, which fell in some dry grass and lighted a blaze which the hunter

Frank W. Mondell.



Representative from Wyoming and floor-leader in the House.

coolly ignored, going on as if it were no concern of his. This finally necessitated the hard work of seven men to stop it, and then not until it had burned over several acres of brush and young woods.

A second was due to the carelessness of some one unknown who built a small fire, evidently to warm his coffee and then went on without extinguishing it, leaving it to spread or go out as luck might chance.

A third was due to a combination of carelessness and stupidity. A farmer on the other side of the mountain, burning some brush in a pasture, lost control of his fire and it got into the woods. He summoned help and in about four hours hard work got the fire out, after it had burned over some thirty or forty acres. Nightfall came on, and "chore time" called. The volunteer firefighters gave the woods a final hasty look, and unanimously departed, went home, did their chores and went to bed. That night about nine o'clock two of us, on this side of the hill discovered that the fire had broken out again. We climbed up to it. Luckily for us, there was no wind and the two of us finally got it out by midnight. Then we organized a two-man patrol and went all around the fire lines, old and new. The result of this inspection was the finding of three big, old pine stumps, showing no fire on the outside, but literally a mass of smoldering, half-rotten punk within, after the outer shell was torn off. It took us nearly two hours more to extinguish these, each one of which had in it the starting of a new blaze on the invitation of any wandering gust of wind.

It is stated that the second outbreak of the big New Jersey fire, which did more damage than the first, was due to a smoldering stump which the fire-fighters had left, thinking it couldn't start anything.

Well, thinking over these and many other woods fires, I can't help but see that a great majority of them were not only preventable but inexcusable. They were either the results of human carelessness, which is always a form of selfishness—or of reckless "don't-care-a-damnit-ness"—or of underheadness—or of simple sheer stupidity.

I used to hear the old people say, some-

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times: "Fire is a good servant but a bad master." Considering the universality of its use, it is hard to find any adequate excuse for those who mishandle it.

"We've all heard it said, also, that a man is not to blame for what he doesn't know. That is not quite true—at least, not when put just that way. A man ought not to be blamed for not knowing that which he can't find out. But he is to be blamed for not knowing the simple, everyday facts of nature, which are as clear and self-evident as the nose on one's face. The man or woman who doesn't know that fire burns, or that a blaze started in dry grass or leaves will spread before the wind—well, such a person is unfit to be allowed to have matches, or a flint and steel and tinder-box, either!"

There's no apparent call for any more law on the subject. But there is call for a campaign of education regarding outdoor fires.

I don't recall the figures of fire losses in this country. But I remember enough to know that they run up to many hundred million dollars every year. And three-quarters of all this loss—perhaps more—is due to the carelessness or recklessness or stupidity of human beings.

The Boy Scouts are being taught wisdom in the matter of campfires, etc., but there is more need of the teaching among grown-ups. It is we who are old enough and big enough to know better who most deserve blushing. If our foolishness only resulted in the burning of our own woods or barns it would not be so bad. But when we endanger other by it we're coming perilously near the line which divides mere numskulls from actual enemies of society.

SALEM

A large crowd attended a kitchen dance at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Dixon Tuesday evening, May 2. Guests were present from Norwich, Yantic, Bozrah, Pithville, Colchester and other surrounding towns. Sandwiches, cake and coffee were served by the hostess. An enjoyable evening was spent by all.

LIBERTY HILL

Miss Jessie Sheffield, of Worcester, Mass., was a week-end guest of her cousin, Mr. and Mrs. John Clarke.

William F. Harvey of Norwich spent Sunday with relatives here.

Mr. and Mrs. William Cochran of Webster, Mass., visited Mrs. Cochran's sister, Mrs. Winthrop D. Davoll over the week-end.

Mrs. E. A. Noyes accompanied by her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. George A. Trotter arrived at her home here from Needham Heights, Mass., Saturday afternoon. Mr. Trotter went Sunday to his parental home in South Manchester to visit his father and mother.

Mrs. Trotter staying with her mother, who expects to spend the summer here.

Sister and Mrs. F. A. Vemplanck of South Manchester were guests of Mrs. E. A. Noyes Sunday.

Rev. William S. Woolworth's household goods have arrived and were unloaded and put in the paragon Saturday.

The C. E. society is to have a social at the church rooms Thursday evening.

HEBRON

Rev. Howard Champe, Randall Tenth and Warren Thayer attended the older boys' conference in Rockville Friday and Saturday.

The C. E. society is to hold a social at the home of Mrs. Gertrude Hough Friday evening.

When Hebron strange met Tuesday evening the first and second degree was conferred on a class of six.

A social and dance was held at Amston hall Saturday evening.

Rev. Mr. Kelley, of Wilton, Conn., preached in the Congregational church Sunday morning. In exchange with the pastor, Rev. Howard Champe.

The Willimantic C. E. union is to hold its spring meeting in Gilead church Saturday, May 6th, with services at 2 and 7 o'clock.

Mr. and Mrs. John Craig, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Belcher and Mrs. Hanna of South Manchester were the guests Sunday of Mr. Craig's daughter, Mrs. Frank Ray.



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"IT'S THE BEAN"

mond. Dr. and Mrs. Pendleton of Colchester were in town Saturday.

Danbury.—The merchants' annual spring bargain day occurs May 17.

Danbury.—Sunday was a notable day in the annals of St. James' Episcopal church because of the dedication of the new parish house and gymnasium and the consecration of the beautiful Banks memorial chapel.



AN OPEN LETTER TO MISS BRIDE-TO-BE:

A particularly important thing—this furnishing of a house. You buy something to eat or to wear and it soon disappears—but not furniture. The purchase of furniture should only be made after careful consideration, for it is with you a long time.

We have furnished hundreds of homes in this city. What has most pleased us, perhaps, is the fact that we have many times furnished two and sometimes three homes in the same family. We appreciate the compliment a mother pays us by advising her daughter to visit our store.

It is our constant aim to merit such confidence—to keep our old friends—to make new ones, too.

ABOUT FURNITURE STYLES—

We have in our store nothing but furniture efficiently made by master workmen—furniture that will last, please by its beauty of design and brighten the home. Any period that you may desire can be found here—whether it is a Louis XVI Bedroom Suite—a Renaissance Davenport Table—a Heppelwhite Dining Room Suite or a Queen Anne Living Room Suite. We may not have just what you may want in each instance—but we ask that you pay us a visit and merely see for yourself if your wants can be satisfied.

We have been in business too long and we are building our foundation too well to try to sell you something you do not want. What we shall do is give you the benefit of our years of experience and advise what type of furniture is best suited to your needs. This service you can get from none other than a reputable furniture man with years of experience in buying quality merchandise behind him. He alone knows thoroughly the concerns with which he deals—he alone can give that advice so needed by young couples.

ABOUT FURNITURE PRICES—

When it comes to prices—that is our strong talking point. You realize that you want to get the most for your money and we guarantee this to you. We stand ready to prove that we will furnish you with standard furniture at a lower price than any other furniture house. This does not mean that you cannot buy cheaper furniture. What it does mean is this—select any piece of

furniture in the store and compare its price with that of the same article in any other store—you will find our price is appreciably lower.

You may ask—how do we do this? This is the answer. When you see a store with expensive fixtures, dazzling displays, complicated clerical and office systems—these all cost money—some one has to pay. This cost of doing business is added to the cost of the goods and must be paid by the purchaser before the dealer makes any profit. In our store we keep this "over-head", as it is called, down to the lowest possible point, so that our patrons reap the benefit.

Remember this, though, we never sacrifice quality for the sake of price. All our goods are backed up by our guarantee and that of the manufacturer. Our duty is to serve you and your wants. This service has characterized our store for thirty years and will continue as long as our doors remain open.

ABOUT OUR TERMS—

For those who find it inconvenient to pay cash, we are always ready and willing to make credit arrangements. We ask only what is reasonable as regards the initial payment and the weekly or monthly dues. Perhaps you, too, would like to avail yourself of this method.

Trusting that we may have the opportunity of showing you what we can do to make your love-nest most attractive (if we can't do this we don't want you to buy, but we do invite an inspection of our goods and prices), we are

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